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Award Number: DAMD17-01-1-0493

TITLE: Topographical Information Map of the Nation's Breast  
Cancer Research Portfolio

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REPORT DATE: June 2002

TYPE OF REPORT: Final

PREPARED FOR: U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command  
Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: Approved for Public Release;  
Distribution Unlimited

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20021101 029

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 074-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE June 2002	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Final (21 May 01 - 20 May 02)		
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Topographical Information Map of the Nation's Breast Cancer Research Portfolio		5. FUNDING NUMBERS DAMD17-01-1-0493		
6. AUTHOR(S) Tammy O. Tengs, Sc.D.				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  University of California, Irvine Irvine, California 92697-1875  E-Mail: <a href="mailto:tengs@uci.edu">tengs@uci.edu</a>		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012		10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER		
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. Abstract (Maximum 200 Words) (abstract should contain no proprietary or confidential information) <p>The primary objective of this research is to understand historical patterns in the nation's breast cancer research portfolio. To achieve this objective, we created "topographical information maps" of abstracts of breast cancer research articles. The maps look like landscape maps with contour lines indicating elevation. Peaks represent scientific areas where there is a great deal of research. Valleys represent areas where there is comparatively little research. Islands represent opportunities for interdisciplinary or translational research. Hills appearing in close spatial proximity indicate closely related areas of research. Hills appearing far apart indicate research areas where there is currently little synergy.</p> <p>Interactive versions of these maps are available at <a href="http://www.hprg.uci.edu">http://www.hprg.uci.edu</a>. We hope our work will help scientists, policy makers, research administrators, and advocates understand historical research patterns aiding their efforts to set future scientific priorities toward the goal of eradicating breast cancer.</p>				
14. SUBJECT TERMS informatics, science policy			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 9	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Unlimited	

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

The primary objective of this research is to create "topographical information maps" to explore patterns in breast cancer research. Scientists, activists, opinion leaders and funding agencies all want to understand our current portfolio of breast cancer research in order to plan future research directions and prioritize investment in understudied areas. This planning could be aided by an easily comprehensible map of current and historical research. A map would allow for the identification of areas where there has already been a lot of research and areas where new research might be fruitful.

## **BODY:**

We used a novel informatics tool called "Themescape" to create maps of all breast cancer research published in journals since the year 1966. We divided historical research into four time periods according to the date of publication and created four corresponding maps. These maps are numbered 15-18 on our web site <http://www.hprg.uci.edu>.

Map 15. Journal articles, 1966-1984  
Map 16. Journal articles, 1985-1989  
Map 17. Journal articles, 1990-1994  
Map 18. Journal articles, 1995-present

To identify articles, we searched MEDLINE on MESH subject terms such as "breast neoplasm". The maps are based on abstracts from journal articles. The oldest one, map 15, is based on 11,221 abstracts; map 16 is based on 10,583 abstracts; map 17 is based on 15,258 abstracts; and the latest one, map 18, is based on 26,548 abstracts.

After creating the maps, we found that because they depict research ranging from the most basic to the most applied, interpreting the patterns required a broad understanding of the science of breast cancer. Consequently, we decided to seek the advice of breast cancer experts in interpreting the maps. We developed a survey inquiring about the patterns they observed, the meaning of those patterns, etc., and pilot tested the survey. We then applied for and received a grant from the University of California Irvine Newkirk Center for Science and Society to survey national breast cancer experts, asking them to interpret the maps. We obtained human subjects approval and we are now in the process of administering this survey. Once we have completed our survey of breast cancer experts we will have a better understanding of the meaning of the patterns that are visible in the maps. We will then draft manuscripts based on the patterns identified.

Interactive maps are currently available on our web site <http://www.hprg.uci.edu> and also appear in the appendix to this final report.

## **KEY RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Created Themescape maps of 63,610 breast cancer research articles published over more than three decades. See <http://www.hprg.uci.edu>
- Applied for and received additional grant funding to survey breast cancer experts inviting them to interpret the maps.

## **REPORTABLE OUTCOMES:**

Blake C, Tengs T. The nation's breast cancer research portfolio: A view from 30,000 feet. Invited presentation at the Avon Symposium, University of California, Irvine CA, October 2001.

Themescape maps of all published breast cancer research. See <http://www.hprg.uci.edu>

Principal investigator, "Improving Scientific Policymakers' Understanding of the Nation's Breast Cancer Research Portfolio," University of California Irvine Newkirk Center seed grant, awarded 2002.

## **CONCLUSIONS:**

We created maps of all breast cancer research published over the last several decades. The maps show peaks where there is a great deal of research and valleys where there is little research. We hope that these maps will be of use to scientists, policy makers and opinion leaders as they set future scientific priorities in breast cancer.

## **REFERENCES:**

Blake C, Tengs T. The nation's breast cancer research portfolio: A view from 30,000 feet. Invited presentation at the Avon Symposium, University of California, Irvine CA, October 2001.

Themescape maps of all published breast cancer research. See <http://www.hprg.uci.edu>

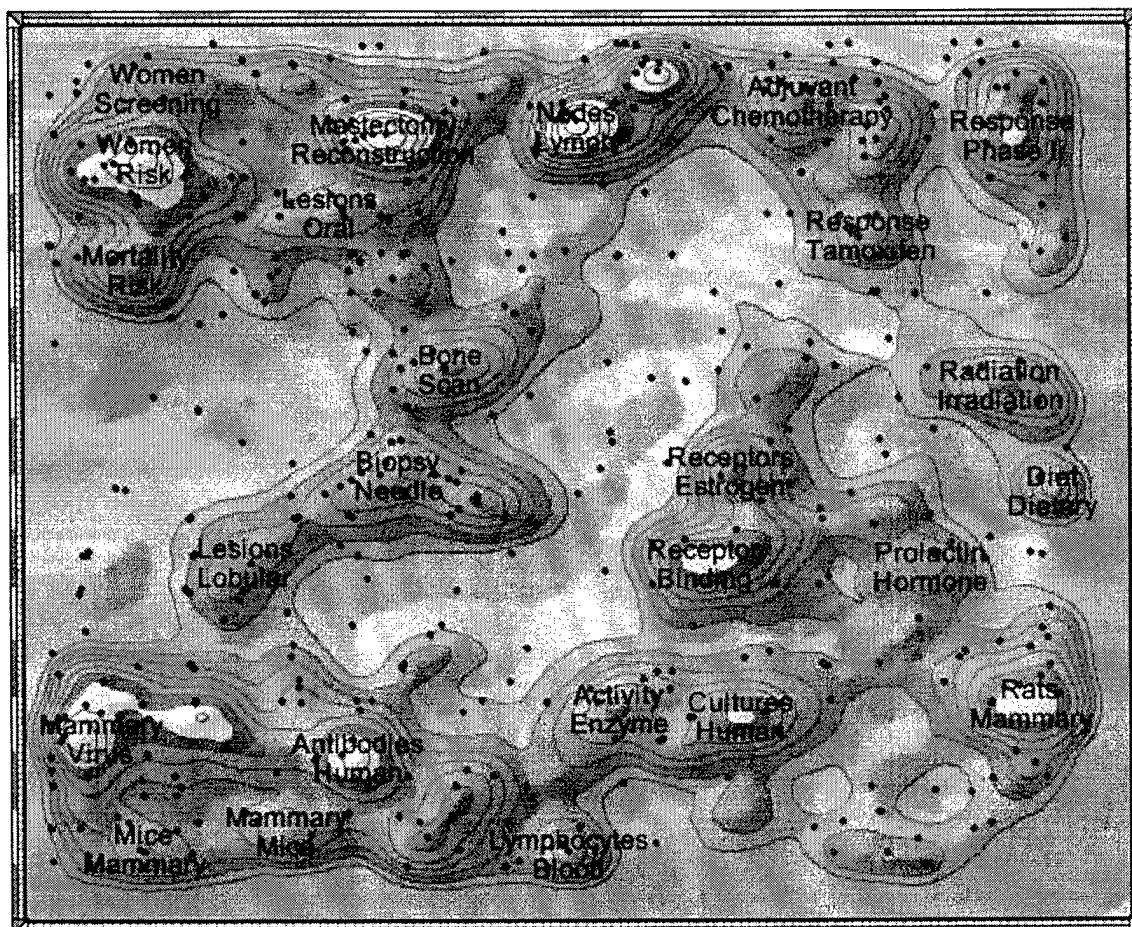
Principal investigator, "Improving Scientific Policymakers' Understanding of the Nation's Breast Cancer Research Portfolio," University of California Irvine Newkirk Center seed grant, awarded 2002.

## **APENDICES:**

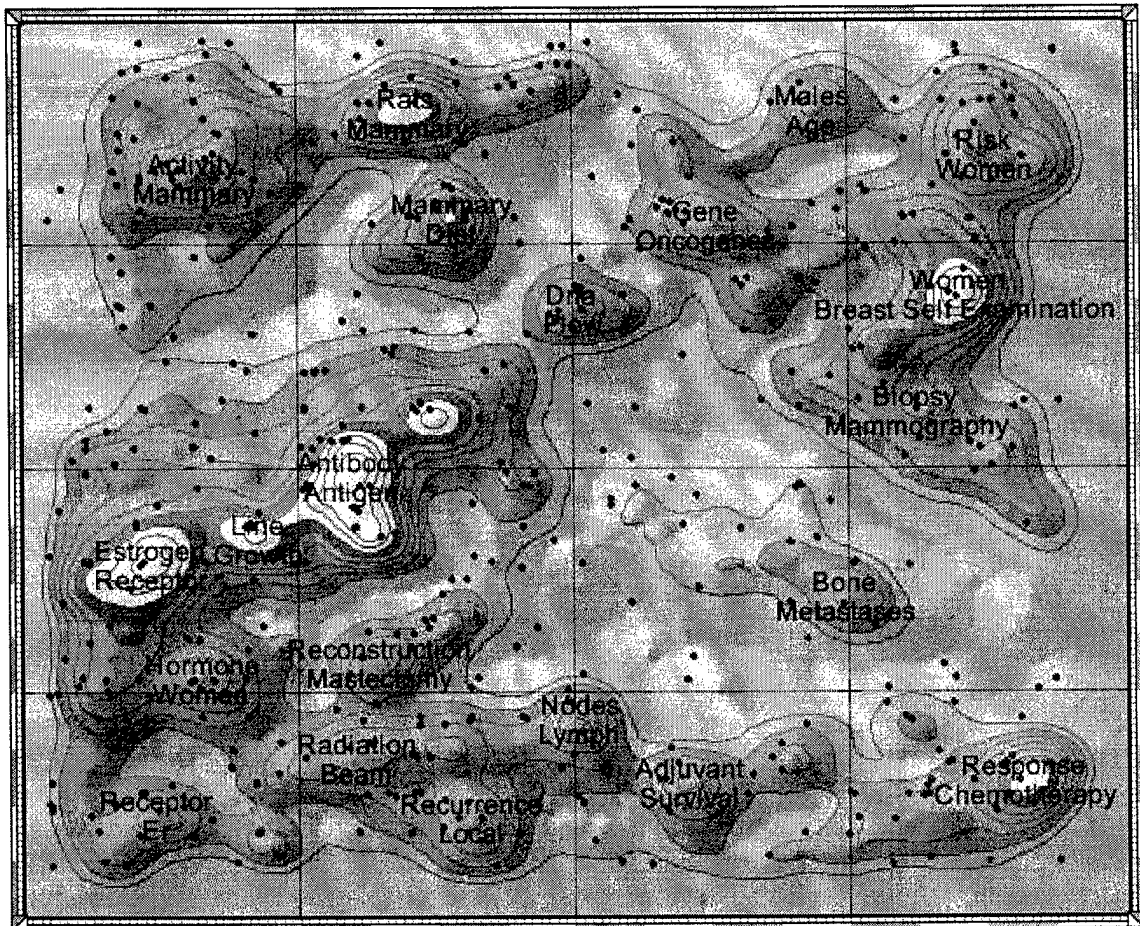
Four maps are attached.

## Appendix

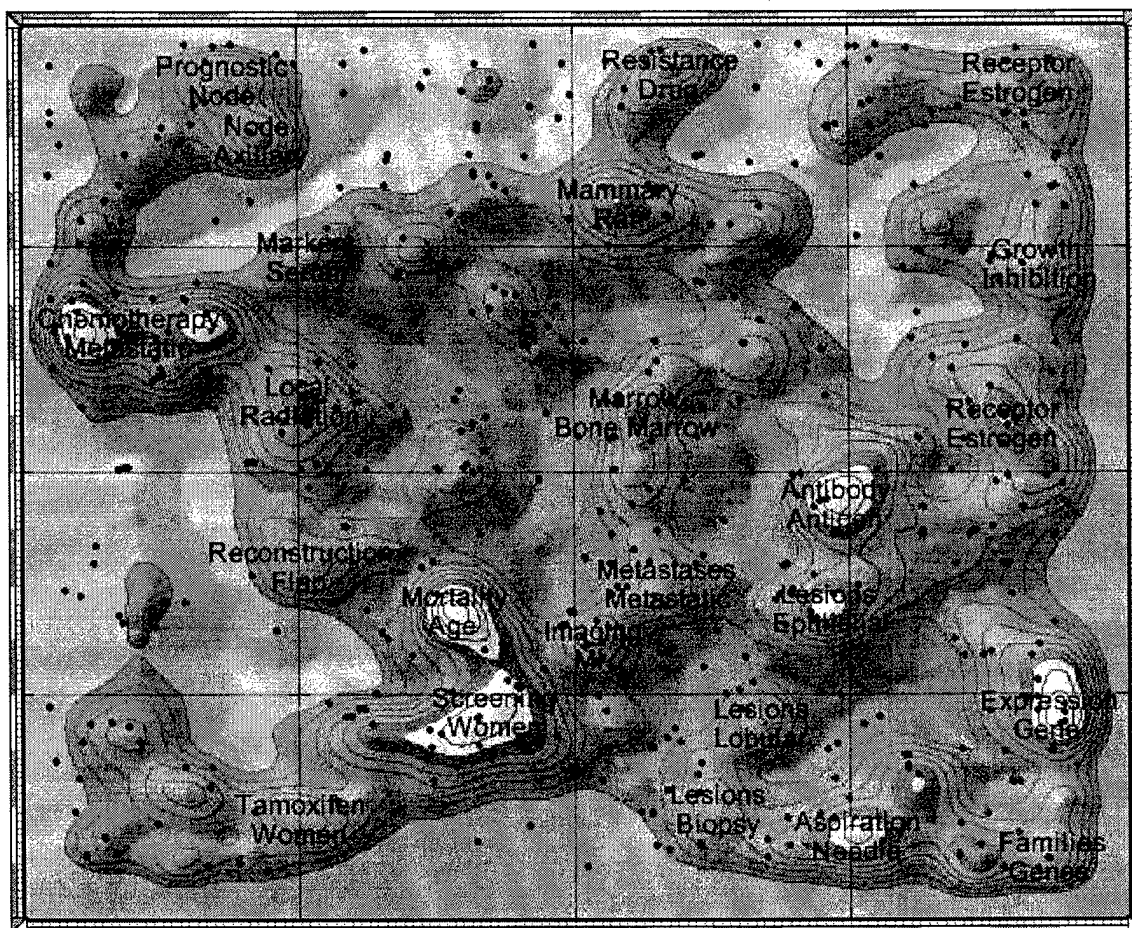
### Themescape Maps of Abstracts from Published Journal Articles on Breast Cancer Research



Map 15. Journal articles, 1966-1984

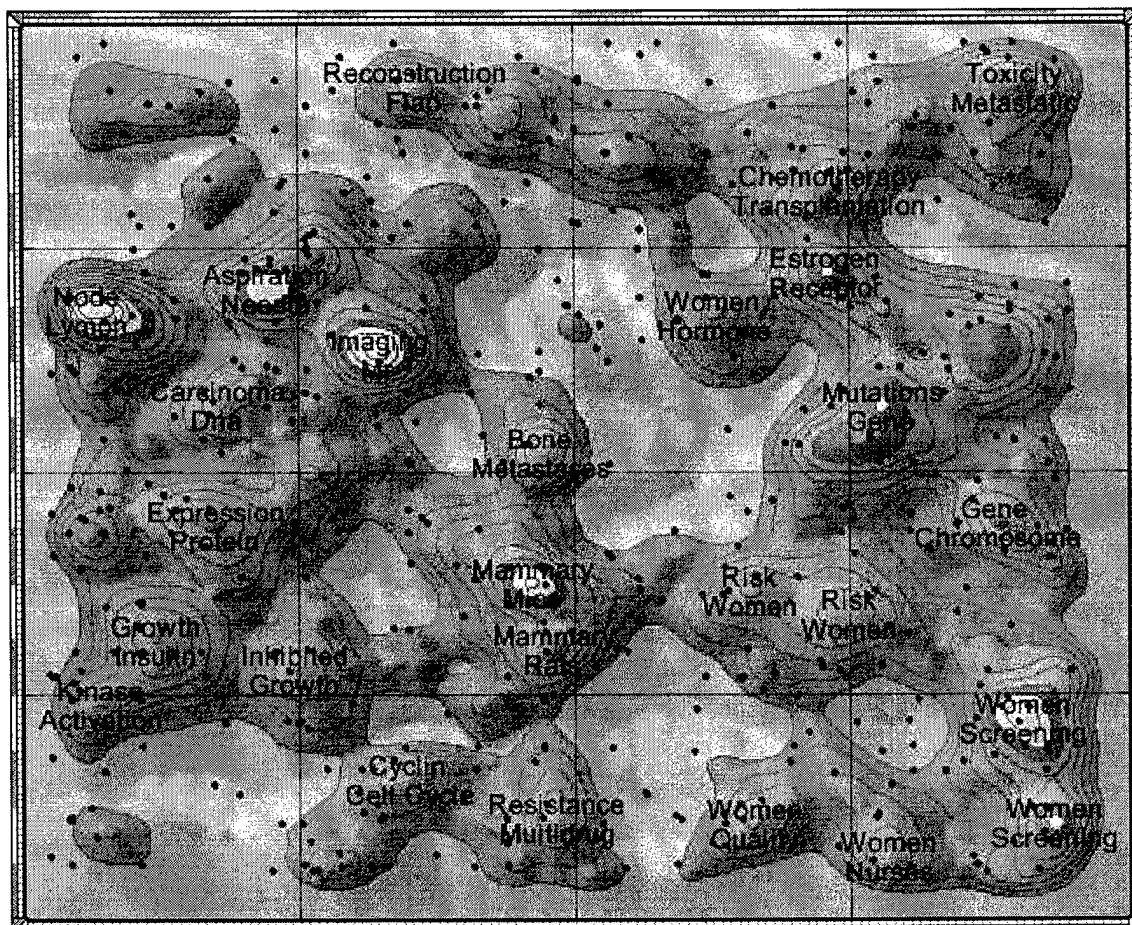


Map 16. Journal articles, 1985-1989



Map 17. Journal articles, 1990-1994





Map 18. Journal articles, 1995-present